1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 564 cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

[135] 326 316 423 Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyaq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyaq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

[754]

325 Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bagi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,